



**PHOTOGRAPHER:** **ROSS & ORMSBY** (active in Petaluma 1868)

**SITTER:** **LEGRAND (LEE) ELLSWORTH** (1828 - 1900)

**DATE:** 1868

**PHOTOGRAPHIC FORMAT:** enlarged reprint of original carte de visite

**IMPRINT:** "Ross & Ormsby, Photographers, Petaluma Cal."

**COLLECTION OF LAWRENCE REED**

This oval shaped, bust portrait was taken in 1868 and depicts Legrand Ellsworth, one of Petaluma's most important 19th century citizens. Photographed from a low angle, Ellsworth's commanding presence is accentuated. He gazes directly at the viewer, appearing intense but at ease in his fine, wool, vested suit. A copy of this carte de visite is owned by the Beinecke Library, Yale University; it is quite probable Ellsworth ordered copies of this portrait by the dozen and handed them out to his friends and acquaintances.

Ellsworth was forty years old when this portrait was taken, a civic leader and successful business man in his prime. He arrived in Petaluma in 1855, and throughout his years in the community founded and managed a lumber business, a furniture store and a saddlery and harness shop.

Even more impressive is the long list of roles he played as a civic leader. One of his most important and powerful positions was as President of Petaluma's Board of Trustees. On April 15, 1865, in his role as President, Ellsworth moved to adjourn the board meeting. The minutes read, "...Ellsworth announced to the Board that Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, had been assassinated on the previous evening and moved that in respect of his memory the Board do [sic] now adjourn..." You can view these meeting minutes in this exhibit's display of Petaluma's incorporation documents.

Ellsworth, like most Petalumans, was a Northern sympathizer, a sentiment one would like to read in his choice of facial hair. In this portrait, Ellsworth sports a prominent Shenandoah beard made popular by President Lincoln.

Make certain to read the inspiring eulogy written to honor Ellsworth which is displayed to the left of this photograph and below his official portrait as Grand Chief Patriarch of the Petaluma Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Lodge 30.

Paula Freund, 2017